

FRENCH WARS IN BITTER BATTLE

Winning of Terney-Sorny and Leully Makes Big Difference in Situation

FOE'S HIGHWAYS IN VIEW

German Supply Roads and Convoys Now Under Mangin's Observation

By G. H. PERRIS

Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger

Copyright, 1918, by New York Times Co.

With the French Armies, Sept. 4.

The last stage of the victorious approach of Mangin's army to the southern corner of the great German line of defense about Lauffaux makes an immense difference in the situation. We have slowly been climbing by converging routes up what the soldiers call the plateau on the outer slopes and breaking down, one by one, the outlying fortifications of the vast natural citadel that has been strengthened with all the resources of modern military science.

If, as the Cologne Gazette says, this defense has been for the enemy the bitterest battle of the war, its difficulties for the French may easily be admitted. In such a case it is only the most persistent valor in all ranks and the shrewdest dispositions by the army command that can win the road to victory.

We are now up the outer wall of the fortress on the front, Leully to Terney-Sorny, and on the south above Cuffles and Crouy. The former position is the more important because it gives us henceforth extended views over the German rear and supply roads. Standing on the promontory above Leully you look across the Ailette right up the valley between St. Gobain and the Chemin-des-Dames. Angilly is below you. The two towers of Laon Cathedral rise from the northwest horizon, and between these points you have the highways on which the German convoys depend for their food.

Hill 172, just south of Terney-Sorny, the highest point of the Soissons moorlands, which was carried by a famous body of zouaves and other French troops over the dead bodies of the German Prussian Guard, gives a different prospect. Looking back to the southwest, you see swelling slopes cut by the deep, narrow gullies by which we mounted up by foot to the plateau of the Ailette. Forward to the east you face the terrible battlefield where in April of last year from the mouth of a sheltering quarry.

Must Not Relax, Maurice Warns

By MAJOR GENERAL SIR FRED. ERICK B. MAURICE

Continued from Page One

ture of Monchy last week, we take it but an advance step toward the full effect of the movement has now been seen in the breaking of the Drocourt line. They have also won by hard fighting, and it is not possible that our losses should be less than those of the enemy. Forward to the east you face the terrible battlefield where in April of last year from the mouth of a sheltering quarry.

For these we must look beyond the actual battlefield. A week ago, when we were in France, we were told to recover Kemmel, Neuve Eglise Ridge, Bailleul and Estaires without a battle which would cost us many thousands of casualties.

The enemy has been forced to withdraw from all these places and to make considerable readjustment of his front in Flanders, which may go further because of his heavy losses. He has been extraordinarily low as they were a week ago, not that there is any reason to believe that to be excessive, and they have been told to make up for their losses by better results.

Behind our present front, which is moving forward so quickly, there is for many miles a stricken wilderness. There are no landmarks here, as even there are on the Somme battlefields, at least there are rivers and roads and natural features upon which the imagination may fasten for remembrance, but here beyond Neuville-Vitasse and Boly and Croisilles there is nothing but a landscape of bare monotony rising and falling slightly from one slope to another, without high roads cutting across it, without a river or a valley to break its lines, without even ruins more than rubbish heaps of brick which once were hamlets.

Trenches marked by hummocks of white, chalk, zigzag over this infernal desolation, where tangles of barbed wire, all rusted to the color of withered bracken; piles of abandoned shells gleaming wet in the rain, thousands of German stick bombs, gas masks, helmets, boots, gaffs, shattered gun limbers, lorries slashed to pieces by explosives, and huts broken to match-wood are flung about between tumble-down dugouts, deserted gun pits, overturned blockhouses, dead horses, and deep shell pits.

Through this plague-stricken land, mile after mile to the far horizon, our men are marching and our guns are going up and our tents are pitched and our wounded come walking down. Even to them it has become familiar, so that they don't turn their heads to study how this wilderness of death is changed to different tones of evil or of grimness when the sunlight breaks through the rainclouds and washes it all with its pale gold light, revealing more sharply a detail of it all and hidden by a black mass of clouds piled up above the distant slopes.

Ruined Calvary in Croisilles

Yet there is one feature of the landscape to which the naval men turned their heads when they marched up to battle. It is the only thing left standing in all this ruin behind our lines with some character and meaning beyond a mere ruin. In the center of Croisilles, which is quite destroyed so that hardly one brick stands whole upon another, there is a Calvary of life size. The figure of Christ has been smashed from the cross and lies with face upward on the left, almost unscathed. I think, and I am sure, that John the Baptist is the figure of the Calvary.

Our divisions are greater, particularly of the American divisions, and in strength is not far from the French. The French strike the

PHILIP GIBBS PICTURES BRITISH ARMY STRAINING TO STRIKE CRUSHING BLOW AGAINST FLEEING ENEMY IN QUEANT SECTOR

Prisoners Betray Fact That German Army Is Beginning to Break

NAVAL BRIGADES HIT AT CAMBRAI ROAD

Pursuers Sweep Wilderness of Chalk Trenches and Ruin of War

PLAGUE-STRICKEN LAND

Enemy Abandons Last Stores of Ammunition in Hurred Flight

Continued from Page One

Sixty-second division and others fought in clouds of poison gas and under storms of shells.

Take Troops in Night

English troops, who were working with the Canadians on the left, are reported to have taken the village of Etain Monday night with sixty prisoners, and yesterday morning their patrols went into Recourt Wood, east of that, encountering the enemy rear guards, but not meeting stubborn resistance anywhere, so that they went beyond to a high plateau a thousand yards further. The enemy shelled the village of Recourt as soon as our men were in it—so quickly that it is clear his gunners expected us to arrive, and their fighting line withdrew some distance back, leaving a wider No-Man's Land for our men to cross.

It was reported that German troops were debouching in Marquain, across the Arras-Cambrai road, not far from their rear guard, and our guns found this place for their target.

Meanwhile West Lancashire, naval brigades, and Lowland Scots, in the Seventeenth Corps below the Canadians were advancing steadily. I told yesterday how the West Lancashire attacked in the morning, in line with the Canadians, after much hard fighting on previous days, and then swung southward and cleared out the triangle between the Hindenburg support line and a wood where many pockets of the enemy remained with machine-gun nests, giving much trouble by their crossfire. They did this with dogged courage, and in one place south of Bois-de-Bouches the marines of our naval brigades helped them crush one of these wasp nests.

The naval men came into action determined not to get thrown back, but to go far forward after their adventures of last March, when they had to fall back before the enemy forces across the Somme battlefields, where I met them fighting a bitter rear-guard action. They had to march far over ground which I traveled yesterday, so I knew the look of it and the smell of it, and the horror of it all.

Miles of Wilderness

Behind our present front, which is moving forward so quickly, there is for many miles a stricken wilderness. There are no landmarks here, as even there are on the Somme battlefields, at least there are rivers and roads and natural features upon which the imagination may fasten for remembrance, but here beyond Neuville-Vitasse and Boly and Croisilles there is nothing but a landscape of bare monotony rising and falling slightly from one slope to another, without high roads cutting across it, without a river or a valley to break its lines, without even ruins more than rubbish heaps of brick which once were hamlets.

Trenches marked by hummocks of white, chalk, zigzag over this infernal desolation, where tangles of barbed wire, all rusted to the color of withered bracken; piles of abandoned shells gleaming wet in the rain, thousands of German stick bombs, gas masks, helmets, boots, gaffs, shattered gun limbers, lorries slashed to pieces by explosives, and huts broken to match-wood are flung about between tumble-down dugouts, deserted gun pits, overturned blockhouses, dead horses, and deep shell pits.

Through this plague-stricken land, mile after mile to the far horizon, our men are marching and our guns are going up and our tents are pitched and our wounded come walking down. Even to them it has become familiar, so that they don't turn their heads to study how this wilderness of death is changed to different tones of evil or of grimness when the sunlight breaks through the rainclouds and washes it all with its pale gold light, revealing more sharply a detail of it all and hidden by a black mass of clouds piled up above the distant slopes.

Ruined Calvary in Croisilles

Yet there is one feature of the landscape to which the naval men turned their heads when they marched up to battle. It is the only thing left standing in all this ruin behind our lines with some character and meaning beyond a mere ruin. In the center of Croisilles, which is quite destroyed so that hardly one brick stands whole upon another, there is a Calvary of life size. The figure of Christ has been smashed from the cross and lies with face upward on the left, almost unscathed. I think, and I am sure, that John the Baptist is the figure of the Calvary.

Our divisions are greater, particularly of the American divisions, and in strength is not far from the French. The French strike the

capture of pity for the evil that has been done.

I write these things so that people who don't see them may have in their mind's eye the scenes through which our men are passing, yet no words of mine can give more than a faint, blurred image of what this desolation is really like.

For miles our naval brigades marched through this until they reached their line of action south of the Canadians and below Houche Wood. As I have said, some Royal Marines turned aside to go to the help of the West Lancashire, but two other bodies of marines and Ansons, followed by Hawkes, Drakes and Hood, went forward to their first objective, swinging southward in order to come down to the valley of the Hindemelle, or Asaghe valley, as it is sometimes called, in order to block it below Inchy. Here they were checked by machine-gun fire from German strongholds, but were successful in destroying these posts and passed on.

Beyond Help of Guns

They passed beyond range and help of their guns for a time into the zone of open warfare, having to rely entirely upon their own rifles and machine-guns for fire power. Their machine-guns did terrible work among the enemy. One team fired 30,000 rounds at the retreating Germans and many men fell under this sweeping fire. Very cunningly and rapidly our naval machine-gun crews worked their way forward with patrols and small bodies of infantry, enfilading the German position and getting their targets.

After all the first objectives had been taken, one brigadier went around his forward line, examined the progress ahead and, satisfied that his men could go further without grave peril, ordered them to advance again and keep on, as long as they did not lose touch with each other or meet trouble in overwhelming odds. Darkness came but they did not stop, and still crept forward slowly and cautiously into the enemy's country until dawn came, when they found themselves on the west side of Inchy with Queant and in front of them the enemy's line.

Their duty was to block the valley and capture Queant by this turning movement from the north. According to this plan they spread out and went down the slopes to the valley on the east side of Queant and Pronville, closer to them than had been intended at first, but achieving the same result.

All the Germans fled from Queant before their arrival, panic-stricken at the knowledge that we were behind their lines and bearing down on them. A small garrison of seventy men was still holding out in Pronville, and these surrendered to a man when they found themselves surrounded.

To Cut Cambrai Road

Later in the morning, the naval brigades advanced again below Inchy toward the Bapaume-Cambrai road. Their object, as I said before, was to cut this artery of German retreat. If they are successful, it is almost certain that they will hamper the movement of the German forces in sharp retreat further south, and that they will prevent the withdrawal of the heavy transports. The enemy succeeded in getting away most of his guns, but has been forced to blow up his own batteries, retaining every nerve to follow up over all this wilderness roadless land. Some of our sixty-pounders, which are heavy and slow-going weapons, were already so far forward that at noon they opened rapid fire on the cross-roads outside Cambrai, so that this highway must have been a terror to the crowded German transports struggling back in their retreat.

German prisoners coming back through this ground watched our gun teams gloomily, understanding the meaning and marvel of all this movement toward their lines, where cheery young gunners officers called to them to carry on and make haste after the boche, and runner colonels, rushed forward to protect new positions and transport men, tethered their horses in fields from which the enemy had gone only a little while ago, leaving frightful litter and filth behind him.

Prisoners Beyond 10,000

Small groups of prisoners passed and passed, so that we must have gone well beyond that 10,000 and in wire inclosures stood new arrivals who had died during the night and were now under guard. Miserable-looking men were sleeping themselves into forgetfulness of war, or pacing up and down like animals in a cage or munching food which we provided. They were very hungry, many of them having gone several days without supplies owing to the chaos and disorganization behind the German line.

In one camp not far from Arras there are today several thousands of prisoners, belonging to ten different divisions, and looking at them one might well wonder whether at last one might well wonder whether at last one might be justified in believing that the German army is beginning to crack. It is only just beginning and is not near the breaking point yet, but the events of the last day and night reveal greater weakness in the German than most of us had dared to hope for, or believe.

In the north they are still drawing back in Flanders, and on the other side of Peronne the Australians are getting much of our old ground.

What German armies are not there? Second Inten-

they will be able to camouflage all this in the eyes of their own people or explain what cannot be explained away is an interesting problem.

Our men are full of hope and eagerness to make an end of the whole business; to strike so hard and to go so fast that the enemy will have no time to recover. To end the year with peace is what inspires the hearts of our men, and for that they will fight with their spirit keyed high. Perhaps our wishes go beyond realities, but at least the vision is good.

Some of our men are on their way back to something like peace already. Red Cross trains are running down from the casualty clearing stations with Blighty men. They line close to the windows, and have passed down from that abominable land where nothing grows between the shell craters but rank grass and weeds, and where there is nothing human except their own selves in this devilish desert of war.

They travel now behind the lines into the sweet good country of France, where the last of the harvest is being gathered in and bronzed wheat sheaves stand in stubbled fields and peasant girls wave hands to them and small boys and girls watch by clover patches where sleek cattle feed, and white, sun-drenched clouds are piled high above peaceful villages.

Through this landscape, near to the scenes of war now far away, in beauty, our wounded pass homeward, bound after great victories.

Wonderful Battle Scenes

September 2—I have seen some very wonderful scenes on the battlefields today. All were proof of another victory, a big and astounding victory, in its first hours. After all our recent progress and the long endurance of our men, we have pierced the sector of the Drocourt-Queant line, the main line of German resistance, and our advanced troops are away beyond. The enemy has massed units from division fresh or broken, every man and batch of men who can hold rifles and use them, pioneers and dismounted cavalry, labor battalions and signallers whom he can gather together in his back areas miles away, and is rushing them up by road and rail, in motors and carts, in order to smash us back and save himself from irreparable disaster.

So there may be hard fighting ahead; but our men—Canadians and Lancashire men and Scots and English county troops—have reached the enemy's strongest line, taken great numbers of prisoners, utterly shattered the enemy's first lines of defense and got into country where we have never been before and where now they are fighting against strong and desperate resistance. It is a remarkable military feat that this attack of ours should be made so quickly after the battles I described last week, in which our men engaged in hard and bitter fighting around Bullecourt and Hendecourt and Rencourt with the Germans stiffening against them every day. I said in my message yesterday that we had gained the phase of offensive, which started on August 8, by driving the enemy back to the edge of his main line of defense—his famous Hindenburg line, with the Drocourt-Queant switch or Wotan line, as they call it, at the northern end—and that a new phase would begin when we drove through that. But I did not then think we could start that new attack so soon, considering all that is involved.

The situation was still difficult yesterday about Hendecourt and Rencourt because the enemy had counter-attacked again heavily and we had withdrawn from both those villages. It was necessary to retake them before the Canadians and our English battalions could go ahead today, to storm the Drocourt-Queant line on the way to Cagnicourt and Bulsey and the country beyond.

Lancashire Retake Villages

This task of retaking the villages was carried out yesterday by Lancashire troops who had already attacked at 12:30 a. m. on one day, 12:30 a. m. on another, and at 4 and 5 o'clock yesterday morning, and now at 6:05 o'clock that evening started out again to meet the enemy in the open. They stormed their way into the villages, and our observers, whom I met today, saw them fighting at close grips with the Germans in the ruined streets, while others of the enemy escaped and ran.

The Lancashire machine gunners did terrible work in this neighborhood, firing at the enemy with close targets, and one sergeant claims to have killed sixty men with his own gun. One Lancashire light-trench mortar battery, further south by Bullecourt, knocked out two machine guns and took twenty-six prisoners, then the next day took thirteen prisoners, engaged three nests of machine guns and cleared them, obtained a direct hit with a trench mortar on one emplacement, destroying its guns, and received the surrender of another machine gun section—a wonderful achievement for one small team of men.

It was after all that work that these Lancashire lads began the attack this morning in conjunction with the Canadians on their left and other British troops on their right. The Canadians themselves held the ground from the dry wood south of the Scarpe to the left of Hendecourt village, and the Drocourt-Queant line was 2500 yards ahead of them, protected by thick and sharp-spiked wire and by an elaborate trench system with many dugouts and gun emplacements and strong artillery support. Then they had to go 1500 yards more to the west side of Dury and Cagnicourt, and then to get through another line to Villers.

They were able to camouflage all this in the eyes of their own people or explain what cannot be explained away is an interesting problem.

Our men are full of hope and eagerness to make an end of the whole business; to strike so hard and to go so fast that the enemy will have no time to recover. To end the year with peace is what inspires the hearts of our men, and for that they will fight with their spirit keyed high. Perhaps our wishes go beyond realities, but at least the vision is good.

Some of our men are on their way back to something like peace already. Red Cross trains are running down from the casualty clearing stations with Blighty men. They line close to the windows, and have passed down from that abominable land where nothing grows between the shell craters but rank grass and weeds, and where there is nothing human except their own selves in this devilish desert of war.

They travel now behind the lines into the sweet good country of France, where the last of the harvest is being gathered in and bronzed wheat sheaves stand in stubbled fields and peasant girls wave hands to them and small boys and girls watch by clover patches where sleek cattle feed, and white, sun-drenched clouds are piled high above peaceful villages.

Through this landscape, near to the scenes of war now far away, in beauty, our wounded pass homeward, bound after great victories.

Wonderful Battle Scenes

September 2—I have seen some very wonderful scenes on the battlefields today. All were proof of another victory, a big and astounding victory, in its first hours. After all our recent progress and the long endurance of our men, we have pierced the sector of the Drocourt-Queant line, the main line of German resistance, and our advanced troops are away beyond. The enemy has massed units from division fresh or broken, every man and batch of men who can hold rifles and use them, pioneers and dismounted cavalry, labor battalions and signallers whom he can gather together in his back areas miles away, and is rushing them up by road and rail, in motors and carts, in order to smash us back and save himself from irreparable disaster.

So there may be hard fighting ahead; but our men—Canadians and Lancashire men and Scots and English county troops—have reached the enemy's strongest line, taken great numbers of prisoners, utterly shattered the enemy's first lines of defense and got into country where we have never been before and where now they are fighting against strong and desperate resistance. It is a remarkable military feat that this attack of ours should be made so quickly after the battles I described last week, in which our men engaged in hard and bitter fighting around Bullecourt and Hendecourt and Rencourt with the Germans stiffening against them every day. I said in my message yesterday that we had gained the phase of offensive, which started on August 8, by driving the enemy back to the edge of his main line of defense—his famous Hindenburg line, with the Drocourt-Queant switch or Wotan line, as they call it, at the northern end—and that a new phase would begin when we drove through that. But I did not then think we could start that new attack so soon, considering all that is involved.

The situation was still difficult yesterday about Hendecourt and Rencourt because the enemy had counter-attacked again heavily and we had withdrawn from both those villages. It was necessary to retake them before the Canadians and our English battalions could go ahead today, to storm the Drocourt-Queant line on the way to Cagnicourt and Bulsey and the country beyond.

Lancashire Retake Villages

This task of retaking the villages was carried out yesterday by Lancashire troops who had already attacked at 12:30 a. m. on one day, 12:30 a. m. on another, and at 4 and 5 o'clock yesterday morning, and now at 6:05 o'clock that evening started out again to meet the enemy in the open. They stormed their way into the villages, and our observers, whom I met today, saw them fighting at close grips with the Germans in the ruined streets, while others of the enemy escaped and ran.

The Lancashire machine gunners did terrible work in this neighborhood, firing at the enemy with close targets, and one sergeant claims to have killed sixty men with his own gun. One Lancashire light-trench mortar battery, further south by Bullecourt, knocked out two machine guns and took twenty-six prisoners, then the next day took thirteen prisoners, engaged three nests of machine guns and cleared them, obtained a direct hit with a trench mortar on one emplacement, destroying its guns, and received the surrender of another machine gun section—a wonderful achievement for one small team of men.

It was after all that work that these Lancashire lads began the attack this morning in conjunction with the Canadians on their left and other British troops on their right. The Canadians themselves held the ground from the dry wood south of the Scarpe to the left of Hendecourt village, and the Drocourt-Queant line was 2500 yards ahead of them, protected by thick and sharp-spiked wire and by an elaborate trench system with many dugouts and gun emplacements and strong artillery support. Then they had to go 1500 yards more to the west side of Dury and Cagnicourt, and then to get through another line to Villers.

They were able to camouflage all this in the eyes of their own people or explain what cannot be explained away is an interesting problem.

Our men are full of hope and eagerness to make an end of the whole business; to strike so hard and to go so fast that the enemy will have no time to recover. To end the year with peace is what inspires the hearts of our men, and for that they will fight with their spirit keyed high. Perhaps our wishes go beyond realities, but at least the vision is good.

Some of our men are on their way back to something like peace already. Red Cross trains are running down from the casualty clearing stations with Blighty men. They line close to the windows, and have passed down from that abominable land where nothing grows between the shell craters but rank grass and weeds, and where there is nothing human except their own selves in this devilish desert of war.

They travel now behind the lines into the sweet good country of France, where the last of the harvest is being gathered in and bronzed wheat sheaves stand in stubbled fields and peasant girls wave hands to them and small boys and girls watch by clover patches where sleek cattle feed, and white, sun-drenched clouds are piled high above peaceful villages.

Through this landscape, near to the scenes of war now far away, in beauty, our wounded pass homeward, bound after great victories.

Wonderful Battle Scenes

September 2—I have seen some very wonderful scenes on the battlefields today. All were proof of another victory, a big and astounding victory, in its first hours. After all our recent progress and the long endurance of our men, we have pierced the sector of the Drocourt-Queant line, the main line of German resistance, and our advanced troops are away beyond. The enemy has massed units from division fresh or broken, every man and batch of men who can hold rifles and use them, pioneers and dismounted cavalry, labor battalions and signallers whom he can gather together in his back areas miles away, and is rushing them up by road and rail, in motors and carts, in order to smash us back and save himself from irreparable disaster.

So there may be hard fighting ahead; but our men—Canadians and Lancashire men and Scots and English county troops—have reached the enemy's strongest line, taken great numbers of prisoners, utterly shattered the enemy's first lines of defense and got into country where we have never been before and where now they are fighting against strong and desperate resistance. It is a remarkable military feat that this attack of ours should be made so quickly after the battles I described last week, in which our men engaged in hard and bitter fighting around Bullecourt and Hendecourt and Rencourt with the Germans stiffening against them every day. I said in my message yesterday that we had gained the phase of offensive, which started on August 8, by driving the enemy back to the edge of his main line of defense—his famous Hindenburg line, with the Drocourt-Queant switch or Wotan line, as they call it, at the northern end—and that a new phase would begin when we drove through that. But I did not then think we could start that new attack so soon, considering all that is involved.

The situation was still difficult yesterday about Hendecourt and Rencourt because the enemy had counter-attacked again heavily and we had withdrawn from both those villages. It was necessary to retake them before the Canadians and our English battalions could go ahead today, to storm the Drocourt-Queant line on the way to Cagnicourt and Bulsey and the country beyond.

Lancashire Retake Villages

This task of retaking the villages was carried out yesterday by Lancashire troops who had already attacked at 12:30 a. m. on one day, 12:30 a. m. on another, and at 4 and 5 o'clock yesterday morning, and now at 6:05 o'clock that evening started out again to meet the enemy in the open. They stormed their way into the villages, and our observers, whom I met today, saw them fighting at close grips with the Germans in the ruined streets, while others of the enemy escaped and ran.

The Lancashire machine gunners did terrible work in this neighborhood, firing at the enemy with close targets, and one sergeant claims to have killed sixty men with his own gun. One Lancashire light-trench mortar battery, further south by Bullecourt, knocked out two machine guns and took twenty-six prisoners, then the next day took thirteen prisoners, engaged three nests of machine guns and cleared them, obtained a direct hit with a trench mortar on one emplacement, destroying its guns, and received the surrender of another machine gun section—a wonderful achievement for one small team of men.

It was after all that work that these Lancashire lads began the attack this morning in conjunction with the Canadians on their left and other British troops on their right. The Canadians themselves held the ground from the dry wood south of the Scarpe to the left of Hendecourt village, and the Drocourt-Queant line was 2500 yards ahead of them, protected by thick and sharp-spiked wire and by an elaborate trench system with many dugouts and gun emplacements and strong artillery support. Then they had to go 1500 yards more to the west side of Dury and Cagnicourt, and then to get through another line to Villers.

They were able to camouflage all this in the eyes of their own people or explain what cannot be explained away is an interesting problem.

Our men are full of hope and eagerness to make an end of the whole business; to strike so hard and to go so fast that the enemy will have no time to recover. To end the year with peace is what inspires the hearts of our men, and for that they will fight with their spirit keyed high. Perhaps our wishes go beyond realities, but at least the vision is good.

Some of our men are on their way back to something like peace already. Red Cross trains are running down from the casualty clearing stations with Blighty men. They line close to the windows, and have passed down from that abominable land where nothing grows between the shell craters but rank grass and weeds, and where there is nothing human except their own selves in this devilish desert of war.

They travel now behind the lines into the sweet good country of France, where the last of the harvest is being gathered in and bronzed wheat sheaves stand in stubbled fields and peasant girls wave hands to them and small boys and girls watch by clover patches where sleek cattle feed, and white, sun-drenched clouds are piled high above peaceful villages.

Through this landscape, near to the scenes of war now far away, in beauty, our wounded pass homeward, bound after great victories.

Wonderful Battle Scenes

September 2—I have seen some very wonderful scenes on the battlefields today. All were proof of another victory, a big and astounding victory, in its first hours. After all our recent progress and the long endurance of our men, we have pierced the sector of the Drocourt-Queant line, the main line of German resistance, and our advanced troops are away beyond. The enemy has massed units from division fresh or broken, every man and batch of men who can hold rifles and use them, pioneers and dismounted cavalry, labor battalions and signallers whom he can gather together in his back areas miles away, and is rushing them up by road and rail, in motors and carts, in order to smash us back and save himself from irreparable disaster.

So there may be hard fighting ahead; but our men—Canadians and Lancashire men and Scots and English county troops—have reached the enemy's strongest line, taken great numbers of prisoners, utterly shattered the enemy's first lines of defense and got into country where we have never been before and where now they are fighting against strong and desperate resistance. It is a remarkable military feat that this attack of ours should be made so quickly after the battles I described last week, in which our men engaged in hard and bitter fighting around Bullecourt and Hendecourt and Rencourt with the Germans stiffening against them every day. I said in my message yesterday that we had gained the phase of offensive, which started on August 8, by driving the enemy back to the edge of his main line of defense—his famous Hindenburg line, with the Drocourt-Queant switch or Wotan line, as they call it, at the northern end—and that a new phase would begin when we drove through that. But I did not then think we could start that new attack so soon, considering all that is involved.

The situation was still difficult yesterday about Hendecourt and Rencourt because the enemy had counter-attacked again heavily and we had withdrawn from both those villages. It was necessary to retake them before the Canadians and our English battalions could go ahead today, to storm the Drocourt-Queant line on the way to Cagnicourt and Bulsey and the country beyond.

Lancashire Retake Villages

This task of retaking the villages was carried out yesterday by Lancashire troops who had already attacked at 12:30 a. m. on one day, 12:30 a. m. on another, and at 4 and 5 o'clock yesterday morning, and now at 6:05 o'clock that evening started out again to meet the enemy in the open. They stormed their way into the villages, and our observers, whom I met today, saw them fighting at close grips with the Germans in the ruined streets, while others of the enemy escaped and ran.

The Lancashire machine gunners did terrible work in this neighborhood, firing at the enemy with close targets, and one sergeant claims to have killed sixty men with his own gun. One Lancashire light-trench mortar battery, further south by Bullecourt, knocked out two machine guns and took twenty-six prisoners, then the next day took thirteen prisoners, engaged three nests of machine guns and cleared them, obtained a direct hit with a trench mortar on one emplacement, destroying its guns, and received the surrender of another machine gun section—a wonderful achievement for one small team of men.

It was after all that work that these Lancashire lads began the attack this morning in conjunction with the Canadians on their left and other British troops on their right. The Canadians themselves held the ground from the dry wood south of the Scarpe to the left of Hendecourt village, and the Drocourt-Queant line was 2500 yards ahead of them, protected by thick and sharp-spiked wire and by an elaborate trench system with many dugouts and gun emplacements and strong artillery support. Then they had to go 1500 yards more to the west side of Dury and Cagnicourt, and then to get through another line to Villers.

They were able to camouflage all this in the eyes of their own people or explain what cannot be explained away is an interesting problem.

Our men are full of hope and eagerness to make an end of the whole business; to strike so hard and to go so fast that the enemy will have no time to recover. To end the year with peace is what inspires the hearts of our men, and for that they will fight with their spirit keyed high. Perhaps our wishes go beyond realities, but at least the vision is good.

Some of our men are on their way back to something like peace already. Red Cross trains are running down from the casualty clearing stations with Blighty men. They line close to the windows, and have passed down from that abominable land where nothing grows between the shell craters but rank grass and weeds, and where there is nothing human except their own selves in this devilish desert of war.

They travel now behind the lines into the sweet good country of France, where the last of the harvest is being gathered in and bronzed wheat sheaves stand in stubbled fields and peasant girls wave hands to them and small boys and girls watch by clover patches where sleek cattle feed, and white, sun-drenched clouds are piled high above peaceful villages.

Through this landscape, near to the scenes of war now far away, in beauty, our wounded pass homeward, bound after great victories.

Wonderful Battle Scenes

September 2—I have seen some very wonderful scenes on the battlefields today. All were proof of another victory, a big and astounding victory, in its first hours. After all our recent progress and the long endurance of our men, we have pierced the sector of the Drocourt-Queant line, the main line of German resistance, and our advanced troops are away beyond. The enemy has massed units from division fresh or broken, every man and batch of men who can hold rifles and use them, pioneers and dismounted cavalry, labor battalions and signallers whom he can gather together in his back areas miles away, and is rushing them up by road and rail, in motors and carts, in order to smash us back and save himself from irreparable disaster.

So there may be hard fighting ahead; but our men—Canadians and Lancashire men and Scots and English county troops—have reached the enemy's strongest line, taken great numbers of prisoners, utterly shattered the enemy's first lines of defense and got into country where we have never been before and where now they are fighting against strong and desperate resistance. It is a remarkable military feat that this attack of ours should be made so quickly after the battles I described last week, in which our men engaged in hard and bitter fighting around Bullecourt and Hendecourt and Rencourt with the Germans stiffening against them every day. I said in my message yesterday that we had gained the phase of offensive, which started on August 8, by driving the enemy back to the edge of his main line of defense—his famous Hindenburg line, with the Drocourt-Queant